

Basket Making (Coiling)

Trait-tex®
YARN

A CONTEMPORARY ART FORM

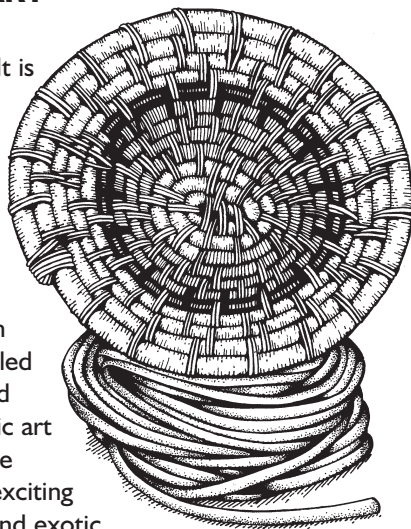
Coiling is not weaving. It is a procedure combining the wrapping of a core material and a sewing process. Coiled baskets with distinctive designs are synonymous with the Southwestern American Indian tribes. These skilled practitioners have raised basket coiling to a classic art form. Coiling is a flexible medium that presents exciting art using both familiar and exotic materials. The following criteria determine what makes a well planned, coiled basket.

1. Difficulty or ease in starting depends upon the core material used.
2. Controlling the shape of the basket.
3. Properly using the sewing stitches.
4. An inconspicuous tapered rim is necessary for satisfactorily ending the basket.
5. What is basket's purpose?

A coiled basket begins with a material that is wrapped around (the core) and then sewn together in an orderly manner. The basket needs a base, a shape and a rim. Now, learn how to make a coiled basket!

THE CORE MATERIAL

The core can be fibre-flex, sisal, mop yarn, plastic tubing, Trait-tex® coiling core 1/4" size, or even a combination of several strands of thin cords bundled together. 1/4" diameter coiling core is easy to work with and provides the best results. Do not use very soft cord or yarn, these compress when stitched giving an uneven appearance to the baskets.



THE WRAPPING MATERIAL

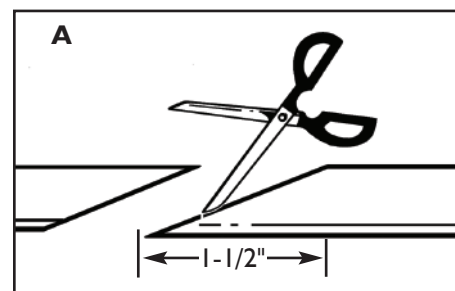
Yarn is threaded through a 3" large-eye blunt needle and wound around the core. The wrap yarn is also used to stitch the core together. Use yarns of different fibers and textures, raffia, swiss-straw, or string for a unique basket.

Yarn may be used as single or double strands. The thinner the yarn, the more wrapping is needed.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

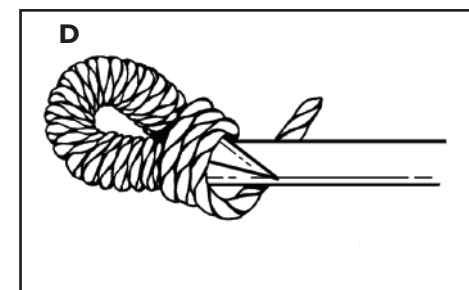
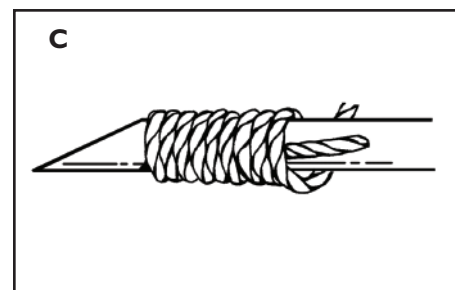
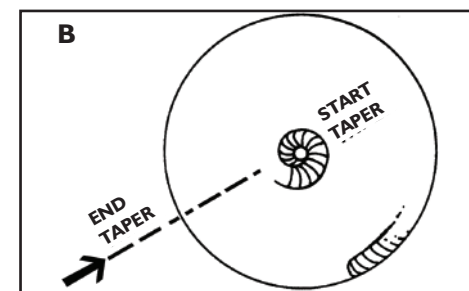
Cut the coiling core to a 12 foot length to make a basket approximately 4" high, 5" diameter at the top. If you wish to make smaller or larger baskets (coasters, trays etc.) vary the length of the core accordingly.

1. Taper the core (Illus. A). This must be done to begin and end a basket or to splice the coiling core if necessary. Use scissors or a utility knife to cut the core at an angle for about 1-1/2".



2. If the yarn being used is single strand, cut a 3 to 4 foot length. A double strand uses half the length of yarn. Thread the yarn through a 3" needle. Very young children find a double strand easier since it requires less wrapping.

3. The point where the first row of the base is begun is called the "Starting Line". Your basket should end at the same point on the rim to give the best appearance. (Illus. B). Start the basket by looping the yarn end (Illus. C). Lay the wrapping yarn along the core about 1 inch and about 1/2" from the tapered end. Then wrap the core until it can bend back onto itself. (Illus. C & D). Wrap the core and the tail end of the core together to begin the basket. This forms the bottom loop. Now, begin stitching.



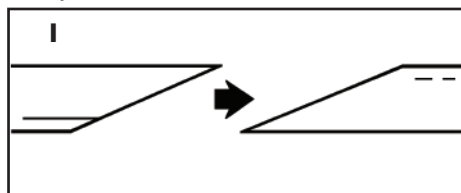
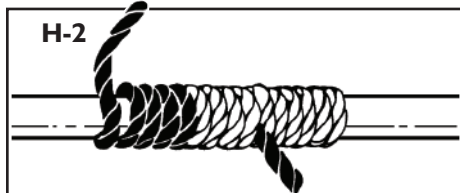
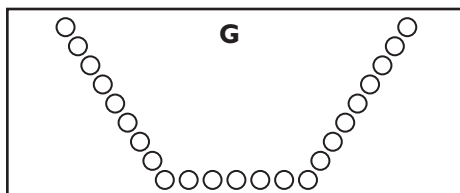
4. You should have a very small opening in the center of the loop. Wrap yarn around the core away from the loop 5 times to hold it in place. Then put 2 stitches through the hole in the loop (Illus. E). Continue to wrap and stitch using a figure eight stitch (Illus. F) until you have completed two rows. If you're making the 4" high x 5" wide basket from a 12 foot length of core, your base should now be 3" in diameter.

5. Remember, the stitches that hold the basket together will show. They should be part of the pattern or texture so it is important to watch where they're placed. Before stitching, plan your pattern. Do you want the stitch pattern to repeat every 6 wraps or every 8 wraps? Whatever pattern you select it must be continued from the bottom of the basket to the top. A good rule is 5 to 7 wraps when using double strands and 8 to 10 wraps when single strand yarn is selected. Randomly spaced stitches give

a basket a sloppy look.

6. Now you can begin the sides of the basket. The basket is shaped by placing the row of coiling next to the previous row and stitching it tightly. If one row is placed directly above the previous row, a straight sided form will result. A sloping side basket results when the new row is placed slightly over the preceding row (Illus. G).

At some point you will need more wrapping yarn and have to splice the yarn. Splicing is also done when you wish to change the color of your stitch/wrap yarn. Thread another needle with the length of yarn you've been using then follow Illus. H-1 and H-2. When 6 to 8 wraps are left on the old yarn, lay a new piece along the core in the direction you are working. Wrap first yarn a few times around the core plus the new yarn. Cut off old yarn, wrap core with new yarn and stitch. The new wrap is secure.



You may want to make a larger basket. The core material must be spliced. Taper both the finished end of the old core and the beginning of the new core. Continue coiling on the old core to where the taper begins. Now place the new core along side the old core in the direction you are working (Illus. I). Continue wrapping around both cores. This makes a neat, strong join. The core can be spliced as often as needed.

FINISHING BASKET

To finish the basket requires tapering the core for a neat rim. Try to end at a point that coincides with the starting point (Illus. B). The more gradual the ending the more professional looking the basket is. Use scissors or a knife to taper the core from 3 to 4 inches. Plastic core or braided rope is more difficult to handle, tapering must be more abrupt. Continue wrapping and stitching until you reach the end of the tapered core.

Place a final stitch and then bring stitching yarn back through the wrapped core about 4 wraps weave the end under the wrap. Cut excess stitching material close so no ends show.

HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Add beads, feathers etc. to the baskets.

Plan colors to be used and consider possible effects when stitching one color into another. Experiment with various stitches and placement of stitches.

Designs are possible by changing yarns or working with two different colors of yarn at one time.

Experiment with natural and synthetic fibers for wrapping.

Explore the possibilities of square or rectangular baskets or using wrapped core for loops, handles, etc.

The following books will give more information and open the door to exploration.

Basketry Today with Materials from Nature Meilach and Nenagh

Basketry Christopher

Contemporary Basketry Robinson

Basketmaking from the Beginning La Barge

PACON CORPORATION
APPLETON, WI 54913-8865
www.pacon.com